

English language teacher education in Vietnam:

**A CASE STUDY OF LOCALISED APPROACHES TO THE
CONCEPT OF METHOD AT A RURAL VIETNAMESE COLLEGE**

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Certificate of authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and in the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Western research has tended to regard English language teaching in Vietnam as traditional and somewhat ineffective. The stereotypical view of Vietnamese learners of English is that they are passive, based on the perception that they are silent in the classroom. However, such studies have failed to consider carefully the impacts of social and cultural factors on teaching contexts. They have also tended to ignore the quality of outcomes achieved in these contexts. In order to address this problem, this research presents a case study with surveys, classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, conducted at a rural teacher training college in Vietnam. This context offered a teaching example involving non-native lecturers, far from ideal Internet connections and minimal opportunities for language practice beyond the classroom. The study of such a context provides a direct and accurate way to investigate the adaptations and outcomes of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam.

The findings of this study showed that although the lecturers were fully committed to the notion of a communicative language teaching method, their interpretations of this method were highly localised and highly successful. Despite the limitations in rural areas and the deficiencies in the Western textbooks used, students learnt English effectively through oral interactions in the classrooms. This was the result of the lecturers' use of scaffolding and sequencing strategies that were designed to maximise the students' production of quantity and quality interactions through supplementary materials. The students were found to use Vietnamese (the L1 for many of the students) as a tool to mediate material in English. The study also found that English language teaching in the rural Vietnamese context was strongly affected by social and

cultural factors, and that those factors had a major impact on the lecturers' interpretations and adaptations of communicative language teaching. ■